

THE SLASHER

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Forestry Commission News

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SCOTTISH HILL-CLIMBING TRIALS

WEST CONSERVANCY LENDS A HAND

SCOTLAND'S WEST CONSERVANCY has become interested in motor hill-climbing trials in a big way, for an agreement was recently completed between the Commission and the Royal Scottish Automobile Club under which the Club is given permission to arrange for motor trials to be held over the old mountain course of Rest and Be Thankful, in Ardgartan Forest, Argyllshire.

For the first meeting, held on a Saturday last month, 15,000 people sweltered in the sun-scorched Glencroe valley and watched the hill climb over this famous old road which, incidentally, is known to have been in course of construction round about 1748. The work was then being carried out by soldiery, who are thought to have erected a stone in the locality bearing the simple injunction: "Rest and be thankful". The setting of the road is majestic, and as a speed course it is the only one in the country which offers spectators an uninterrupted view of the entire course and its hazards. And what hazards there are, in this mile of steep tortuous road! None is specially constructed, and the risks consist of a gradient which in part is almost one in seven; there are several harpin bends of unusual severity, a double S bend and a "U"-shaped corner. As one famous racing motorist said, the trials were "worth coming a hundred miles to see".

The event was a good advertisement for the Commission, inasmuch as thousands were able to see the grand work which is being done in clothing the hillsides with trees. Forester A. MACKAY must have had some anxious moments when he saw cars hurtling through his forest at 100 miles an hour, but so well had everything been arranged - particularly the frequent warnings over the loud-speakers as to the need for care with cigarette ends - that his fire-fighting squads were not called upon. But no doubt he heaved a sigh of relief when the last spectator left the scene!

It is hoped that when the R.S.A.C. hold future trials they will again be favoured with fine weather - many Commission officials who use the road have vivid recollections of seeing it under far from pleasing conditions.

* * MORE ABOUT "THE ROYAL"

STUDENTS BUILD MODEL FOREST

THE GWYDYR FORESTER TRAINING SCHOOL played a big part in staging the Commission's exhibit at the Royal Show at Shrewsbury. It has already been related how students provided a flag-pole in the form of a 23-year old, 60ft. high Sitka from Gwydyr. It should go on record that the first year students made and displayed a model of a section of a typical North Wales forest. This showed the mountains, rivers, roads, quarry, village complete with church, a railway, Forest Workers Holdings, nursery and, of course, the woodlands. The model was built in six parts, each weighing 3 cwts; an indicator placard was placed at one side, and to this ran coloured cords, so that the public had no difficulty in identifying the various features of the model. The composition and erection of the model was carried out by E.R.C. JONES, O. REES, T.P. THORPE, A.A. SMITH-JONES and others under the direction of Forester-Instructor C.H. HEAVENER.

Other models were also exhibited, including model gates made by A. SMITH-JONES; working models of a seed-bed shelter machine and seed extraction machinery by R. URE; model of the Newborough sand-dune area, showing afforestation, by E.R.C. JONES and O. REES; and a model by T.P. THORPE depicting turf planting.

The students were also responsible for an attractive and interesting exhibit outside the marquee, forest operations and produce being portrayed and shown. The erection of the entire Forestry Commission exhibit, in fact, fell to the lot of the students, who must have been gratified when the section was visited by the Princess Royal and the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester.

Forester Heavener was in charge, and the lads were accommodated on the showground under canvas. Cocks were D.B. DAVIES and D. LINTON and, in addition to those already mentioned, K. RATCLIFFE, W.E. POWELL, and T. STUDLEY were also in attendance.

* * SAD STORY OF A LUNCH

AND AN UNPOPULAR S.F.O.

AT A RECENT FIELD MEETING (the location of which we dare not divulge) no few than one Directorate Engineer, three Conservators, three Conservancy Engineers, one State Forests Officer and one District Officer gathered together and drove in convoy through pleasant hill-land, midst the familiar scenes of what our critics call regimented conifers and we call P. Years.

Many fords were crossed, many gates opened and shut, and eventually cars were abandoned in an area where habitations were distant; where the Directorate Office was no more than a dimly remembered nightmare; and the noise of telephone and typewriter was replaced by the wail of the curlew and the plaintive cry of the Golden Plover. The sun rose, the day became warm, and hearts were gay. The party walked miles to the nearest ridge, and there the S.F.O. and the District Officer reluctantly parted from the company to travel by car for an appointment in a distant village.

The remaining party pushed bravely on into the wilds, while the S.F.O. and the District Officer eventually reached their destination, and about four o'clock that afternoon, with a good lunch taken and business discussed, the S.F.O. and the District Officer prepared to part company.

It was then that in the S.F.O.'s car, while separating the multi-paraphernalia that seems a necessary part of a forest officer's field day, a bulging green bag was discovered, the ownership of which both parties disclaimed. Inside were five full thermos flasks and seven packets of sandwiches. With sickening heart the awful truth dawned on our hero the S.F.O.

Meanwhile the main party, having topped the third ridge, and having proved to their mutual satisfaction what manly walkers they were, returned in the now blazing sun; hot, thirsty and happy, and content in the knowledge of a job well done - now for the just reward. It was the Directorate Engineer who had a premonition that all was not well. He it was who recalled that the luncheon bag had been put in the S.F.O.'s car. Had the S.F.O. remembered? A whispered remark to the Conservator brought a hearty assurance from the latter that his S.F.O. would never do a thing like that. Not likely. But alas! The worst fears were confirmed, and never before in the history of the Department, we believe, has an S.F.O. been so unpopular.

The green bag and its contents found its way by third party to a nearby hotel, and many days passed before the Conservator and his S.F.O. met. And of that meeting nothing is known to tell.

* * NEWS AND VIEWS FROM NORTH SCOTLAND

WEDDINGS: FOOTBALL: NATURE NOTE

And, by the way, has this Conservancy office the highest marriage rate in the Commission? Before we give figures, will any other Conservancy suggest a challenging number of marriages over the past two years?

By the time this issue of The Slasher appears the newly-formed North Conservancy office football team will, it is expected, have played their first match. After recent practices various members have limped and creaked for days. The paid mourner (The Slasher, June) has now shown prowess as a masseur.

Recently a Pine Marten was accidentally trapped by Forester WILLIAM MACINTOSH, Guisachan, and sent to the Edinburgh Zoo. Caught in a rabbit trap, this specimen was coloured dark brown, and had the usual white breast and long bushy tail. A little larger than a ferret, it was very shy, yet fierce when "cornered". Unfortunately, it lived for less than a month in the Zoo, death being due to the effects of trapping. This Pine Marten was only the second Scottish one ever to be kept in captivity at Edinburgh Zoo.

* * SELECTION BOARD SITS FOR A WEEK

NINETY-THREE CANDIDATES SEEN

What must have been the largest "boarding" in the history of the Forestry Commission took place last month. The Secretary (Mr. F.W. HAMILTON), Deputy Secretary (Mr. E.C. SHANKS) and the Chief Clerks, England and Wales (Mr. E.J.S. HINDS and Mr. M.E.W. MACKENZIE) took a Sunday night train to Edinburgh. The following morning they were joined by MR. F.C. HANDFORD, Chief Clerk, Edinburgh, and interviewing of the Scottish candidates (temporary clerks for submission for establishment and applicants for promotion to EO/TA posts) commenced at 9.30 a.m. This continued throughout the day and on Tuesday, and on Tuesday night the members of the Board left for London, where interviewing continued on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and on Saturday until 3 p.m.

In all 93 candidates were seen, 62 being temporary clerks eligible for establishment under E.O.C. 21/49 (our quota being 14), and 31 being applicants for promotion as stated above. Our congratulations to those who were successful, namely: for submission for establishment as Clerical Officer, Mrs. M.A. NURSE, N.E.(E); A.C. ROSE, N.E.(E); Miss D.M. SMITH, N.E.(E); R.H. WILKINSON, Edinburgh; G.B. FARQUHAR, N.(W); A. REID, Finance, H.Q.-Edinburgh; V.G. WRIGHT, New; P. HUNTER, E.(S); G.M. GORDON, W.(S); N.M. MACDONALD, W.(S);

G. BROWN, H.Q.; W.G.P. MENZIES, Edinburgh; P. LOBAN, S.(S); S.B. THOMSON, S.(S); for promotion to Executive Officer posts - R. PALMER, present station N.E.(E), future posting Finance, H.Q.-Edinburgh; A.M. de GROOTE, N.W.(E); A.J. WALKER, N.E.(E); E.T. CHANNON, New to S.E.(E); J.C. LAIDLAW, S.(S); R.H. FISHER, Aberystwyth to N.(W); R.S. LEAKER, S.(W).

The results reflect great credit on the North East England Conservancy Office, York (three persons for establishment and two for promotion) and on the South Scotland Conservancy, Dumfries (two and one).

* * ADVENTURE IN THE FOREST

THREE CHARGED WITH HOUSE-BREAKING

FORESTER J.F. SCOTT, WHO IS IN CHARGE of Rodesdale, North East England, recently had an unusual experience. On a Saturday afternoon not long ago, while mowing his lawn, he saw that three men had called at the bungalow next door, which he knew to be unoccupied. They disappeared from view, and he assumed they had gone out of the back gate. Nevertheless, ten minutes later Forester Scott saw a man on the road immediately below his garden and came to the conclusion that he was acting suspiciously, especially after seeing another man dash round the side of the neighbouring bungalow, look in a window and then retrace his steps.

Forester Scott dropped his tools, walked round the bungalow, saw an open window, thought of burglars, the telephone and the outside world. From his home, therefore, he telephoned the local police constable ten miles away, who said he would come immediately and asked Forester Scott to meet him en route.

Now with the men disturbed by Forester Scott, one might think this story should end with the circulation by the police of their descriptions. But the unexpected was to happen. On his way to meet the police car Forester Scott saw some walkers who "thumbed" him; he told them he would give them a lift as far as Newcastle, but they would have to leave the sticks they were carrying behind as there was little room in the car. Further along the road the police car was met, whereupon Mr Scott handed over his three passengers, who were subsequently charged with house-breaking.

* * FOOTBALL IS HERE AGAIN

CONSERVANCY TEAM CHALLENGED

ALTHOUGH AT THE TIME OF WRITING the football season has not officially commenced, two enjoyable games have already been played in the West Conservancy, Scotland. In the first place forest workers at Achray challenged the Conservancy office staff and a match was played at Aberfoyle. This was won by the forest workers after a hard tussle. The other challenge came from workers at Loch Ard; this match (a hard one) was also played at Aberfoyle and was won by the staff team. It was noticeable, however, that several of the staff team were somewhat out of training, and aches and pains had to be borne. At both matches the staff team was inspired by the loyal support of the ladies. The hospitality of the workers at Aberfoyle was greatly appreciated.

* * THE NEW HORIZON

LATEST TRANSFERS

THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS WERE REPORTED to Headquarters by 19th July: Head Forester G.W. HOLLIS from Arundel, S.E.(E), to Woking, S.E.(E); Head Forester C.V. SQUIRES from Cwmogwr, S.(W), to Brecon, S.(W); Forester A.ROSS from Hallyburton, E.(S), to Glasgow, W.(S); Forester W. McKAY from Bin, E.(S), to Inglismaldie, E.(S); Forester W. McDONALD from Kirkhill, E.(S), to Tentsmuir, E.(S); Forester W. MASON from Tentsmuir to Roseisle, E.(S); Forester W.F.C. MIDDLETON from Goodwood (Charlton), S.E.(E), to Arundel; Forester D.J. URQUHART from Teindland, E.(S), to Bin; Forester G. GILBERT from Craigvinean, E.(S), to Kirkhill; Forester W.H. McKAY from Borgie, N.(S), to Dundee, S.(S); Forester D. MORLEY from Hardknott, N.W.(E), to Grizedale, N.W.(E); Forester M. MURRAY from Grizedale to Hardknott; Forester N.R. HEPBURN from Dallas, E.(S), to Hallyburton; Forester D. CAMPBELL from Fort Augustus, Research, to Newton, Research; Forester E.A. STEWART from Culbin, E.(S) to Dallas; Forester R.P.C. WOOLFORD from Wigsley, E.(S), to Shouldham, E.(E); Forester J.R.A. FRATER from Strathnairn, N.(S), to Kilcoy, N.(S); Forester F. McNICOL from Dundee to Wauchope, S.(S); Forester A.S. MACKENZIE from Kilcoy to Millbuie, N.(S); Forester N. PHIPPS from South Laggan, N.(S), to Borgie; Forester A. McKENZIE from Leanachan, N.(S), to Slatterdale, N.(S); Forester J.G.M. REID from Newton to Teindland; Foreman J. TARMAN from Hafren, N.(W), to Goed Sarnau, N.(W); Foreman F.W.J. YEOMANS from Allerston, N.E.(E), to Harwood Dale, N.E.(E); Foreman W.F. SKENE from Inglismaldie to Culbin; Foreman C.A. TAYLOR from Millbuie to Strathnairn; Foreman A.J. DUNCAN from Monaghty, E.(S), to Craigvinean; Asst. Engineer E.R. HUGGARD from Rheola, S.(W), to Crychan, S.(W); Surveyor G.L.B. THOMAS from Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury, N.(W); Executive Officer K. BALDWIN from Stores, Headquarters, to Aberystwyth.

* * WHO'S WHO IN THE COMMISSION (No.2)

PROFILE OF FORESTER W. COTTENHAM

FORESTER W. COTTENHAM, OF ROCKINGHAM, EAST ENGLAND, is one of the Commission's oldest "stagers". Demobilised after the first world

war he commenced work for the Commission in January, 1920. Served three days as a labourer and was then made ganger. On May 1st. of the same year was interviewed by the Chairman and made Foreman in charge of the Apethorpe area. On 1st. December, 1925, was promoted to Grade 11 Forester, and on 1st. October, 1938, was promoted to Grade 1 Forester. Has now spent more than 29 years in the Rockingham locality and wonders if the rate of promotion and length of service in one area constitute a record. But let Forester Cottenham take up his own story:

"I would like to say that if ever a fellow had more discouragement in early days than I he was very unlucky. First one and then another would tell me I would never get trees to grow 'on that awful clay at Apethorpe'. I was treated locally as a foreigner; roadways were cut through my fences, and people insisted on making short cuts through the new plantations. But these have long since been obliterated by a good crop of trees."

Forester Cottenham has taken great interest in local sport, and in the years between the wars formed a cricket team from his own staff.

"We have had the usual setbacks and difficulties", says Forester Cottenham, "but the years here have been very pleasant. I would say to all young men - forestry is a grand life!"

* * APPOINTMENT OF MACHINERY RESEARCH OFFICER

ADVENT OF COL.R.G.SHAW

NEWCOMER TO THE DEPARTMENT is COL.R.G.SHAW, who has been appointed Machinery Research Officer and who, in this particular field, succeeds

Col.Kneale, who recently left the Commission for the Colonial Development Corporation. Col.Shaw has been a regular soldier for some 20 years, a large part of this time being spent in the Ministry of Supply on work connected with tank design.

* * THE TRIBES IN THE FOREST

(NEW STYLE REPORTING)

IT CAME TO PASS THAT JAMES, Chief Ruler of the Forests in the West (of Scotland) had compassion on his scribes and grieved because of their ignorance of the ways of the pine, the

larch and the spruce. He therefore essayed to go with them into the land of Ard, which is by the loch. Now at that time the Mighty Ruler who dwelt in the East and who had dominion over all forests in Scotia and to whom James, the Chief Ruler in the West, owed allegiance, had also scribes who were likewise ignorant of the ways of the pine, the larch and the spruce. And it came to pass that certain scribes and members of the tribes in the East and in the West held council together and lo, on an appointed day, the scribes and other members of the tribes did recently journey to the land of Ard, which is by the loch. Now James, being a wise Ruler, chose from his tribe certain men of knowledge and wisdom to instruct the scribes in the ways of the larch, the pine and the spruce. When the end of the instruction had come the men of knowledge and wisdom and other members of the tribes were afflicted with thirst and did hunger, whereupon they journeyed to a place called Gartloaning where they did eat all manner of things. And lo, when they had finished eating, there arose certain members of the tribes and armed themselves with stick and sphere, which being interpreted meaneth a ball, and did mightily strike the ball. After a time the tribes departed and came unto the land of Trossachs where they beheld wondrous views, pleasing to the eye. Then the Chief Ruler and his men of wisdom and knowledge did speak again unto the tribes and behold the ears of the tribes were opened. At the seventeenth hour the tribes made haste to enter into Callander, where they feasted and when they arose it was as if the locusts had been in the land. At the appointed time when it was decreed that the tribes must depart unto their own lands there was great lamentation. Nevertheless they girded their loins, entered their chariots and departed. The tribe from the West lifted up their voices and made a joyful noise and the chariot did shake with the sound thereof. Thus did both tribes return each unto their own land full of the knowledge of the pine, the larch and the spruce.

WOODLAND WHISPERS

CONGRATULATIONS TO DISTRICT OFFICER M.LONG (West, Scotland)

and Mrs.Long on the birth of a daughter.....South East (England) Social Club recently played tennis at Woking against players from Alice Holt. Woking won by 8 sets to 6, with one drawn, after a hard and exciting struggle. Followed tea and a swim in the nearby bathing poolTyping error (somewhere) - "Would you please confirm that the number of days uncertified sick absence be restricted to a maximum of 12 months "(From official correspondence)....."A Fire Service Officer states that fires may be caused by birds carrying lighted cigarette ends to their nests. They will have to learn not to smoke in bed, that's all." (With acknowledgements to Punch).